The Senate met at 11:12 a.m. in Joint Session in the Hall of the House of Representatives for the purpose of a joint memorial session honoring the fallen heroes of Texas, pursuant to the provisions of HCR 163.

The Honorable Steve Ogden, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, called the Senate to order and announced a quorum of the Senate present.

The Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the House of Representatives, called the House to order, announced a quorum of the House present, and stated the purpose of the Joint Session. Speaker Straus also welcomed and thanked the family members of the fallen heroes being honored.

Representative Joe Pickett, Chair of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans Affairs, was recognized and thanked the Texas Army National Guard for the presentation of colors, Deon M. Green for singing the National Anthem, Senator Juan Hinojosa and Representative Ralph Sheffield for leading the pledges of allegiance to the United States and Texas flags, and Representative George Lavender for the invocation.

President Pro Tempore Ogden briefly addressed the Joint Session assemblage and acknowledged the presence of the following: Governor Rick Perry, Texas Veterans Commission Chairman T. P. Mahoney, Railroad Commissioner David Porter, State Comptroller Susan Combs, Brigadier General Orlando Salinas, and Supreme Court Justice Nathan Hecht.

President Pro Tempore Ogden introduced the Honorable Rick Perry, who addressed the Joint Session as follows:

Thank you, Senator Ogden, and my thanks also for the hard work put in by yourself and your colleagues in the Senate, as well as the House through what has been a challenging session.

It’s a pleasure, and an honor, to be with you all today.
Every session, members from both chambers and both sides of the aisle
take some time to put aside our differences and gather here in memory of
those who have fallen in Afghanistan, Iraq and anywhere our forces have
engaged against the minions of global terror. The global war on terror
began as a response to an unprovoked attack, an attack designed to
demoralize us as much as to destroy our way of life.

They miscalculated our ability, as a nation, to rise above the ruins, just
as they miscalculated our resolve to continue the battle wherever it takes us,
and our determination to bring to justice every organization and individual
plotting death and destruction against the citizens of this nation.

Earlier this month, the United States scored a major victory in the
Global War on Terror, as the main architect behind the Sept. 11 attacks and
the global face of the jihad movement, finally met justice at the hands of the
U.S. military.

This was once again a great credit to the bravery, hard work and
determination of our men and women in the armed forces, along with the
unsung heroes in our intelligence community who had spent years of their
lives in the line of fire hunting down this man.

However, the death of bin Laden is not an end to the larger war, and the
struggle to protect our homeland is ongoing.

So we will continue to call upon the best and brightest to stand between
us and those who would do us harm, and join the long line that takes up
arms to defend others.

Many of them, like many I’ve visited with over the last decade, will
come home facing long roads back from debilitating injuries - some of the
injuries visible, and some not.

All too many will not come home at all.

As we honor these brave Texans who made the ultimate sacrifice, we
also continue to offer our heartfelt condolences to those who love them.

It can be no easy thing to balance admiration for your fallen warrior
with the realities of a life that continues to unfold, one challenging day after
another.

Please know that the people of Texas genuinely appreciate the service
and sacrifice of our military personnel, and lift up their survivors in our
thoughts and prayers.

As President Lincoln so eloquently wrote almost 150 years ago to a
mourning mother,

"I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your
bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and
lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a
sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

In the days to come, I encourage you to live your life fully because you
know that each day is precious, and be assured that the cause for which your
loved ones fought and died is still a just and noble cause.

All of us in Texas must endeavor to live our lives in a fashion worthy of
the sacrifices of your loved ones.
May God bless you and, through you, may He continue to bless the
great state of Texas.

(Prepared text)

Senator Van de Putte introduced Senator Brian Birdwell and Representative Leo
Berman for the reading of the names of fallen Texans. Senator Craig Estes and
Representative Dan Flynn were introduced and joined by Governor Perry and
Members from the House and Senate to make the presentation of flags to families of
the fallen soldiers.

Speaker Straus requested a moment of silence. "Amazing Grace" was sung by
Lieutenant Colonel Deon M. Green.

A cannon salute and "Taps" were conducted by the Texas Army National Guard.
Representative George Lavender offered the benediction.

CONCLUSION OF JOINT SESSION

The Speaker of the House of Representatives at 12:51 p.m. announced that the
purpose for which the Joint Session was called having been completed, the House
would stand At Ease pending the departure of its guests.

ADJOURNMENT

President Pro Tempore Ogden at 12:51 p.m. stated the purpose for which the
Joint Session was called having been completed, the Senate, pursuant to a previously
adopted motion, would stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. today.